



GAIL FARBER, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

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ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
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IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: **WM-2**

June 21, 2012

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Gail Farber *Gail Farber*
Director of Public Works

COMMENT LETTER FROM THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT AND LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING THE CLEAN WATER, CLEAN BEACHES INITIATIVE

We are in receipt of the June 19, 2012, joint letter (attached) from the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to your Board expressing concerns with the structure of the Clean Water, Clean Beaches Initiative.

In anticipation of these concerns, Public Works staff has been meeting with representatives from LAUSD's government relations office to provide a briefing on the initiative, discuss the impact to the LAUSD, and alternatives to address LAUSD's financial concerns. That meeting was followed by another with the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Additional future meetings have already been scheduled.

School districts are one of the region's largest property owners and are ideally located in almost every neighborhood to play a key role in implementation of the Water Quality Funding Initiative. Water-quality improvement projects in schools can also have the added benefits of providing educational opportunities, creating much needed shade, capturing stormwater for irrigation, and other multibenefit objectives.

The program elements document submitted to your Board on June 6, 2012, already includes provisions for funding a Public Schools Clean Water Program for water-quality curriculum and Water Quality Capital Improvement Projects. This funding could be made available from the proceeds of the Watershed Authority Groups to school districts for projects and programs. These projects and programs could include, but not be limited to: educational programs related to environmental and water-quality matters,

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construction of multibenefit projects that would incorporate water-quality elements, stormwater capture for school irrigation or groundwater recharge, replacement of asphalt with permeable surfaces, rain gardens, and maintenance of school district facilities related to water quality. In short, school districts will be free to utilize these funds in the same manner and for the same purposes as municipalities.

Public Works will continue its outreach with both the LAUSD and the LBUSD, and other school districts, to ensure that their needs are clearly understood and incorporated into the Clean Water, Clean Beaches Initiative.

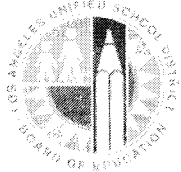
If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Mark Pestrella, Assistant Director, at (626) 458-4001 or mpestrel@dpw.lacounty.gov.

PD:sw

P:\wmpubl\Funding Initiative\LAUSD response.doc\C12150

Attach.

cc: Chief Executive Office (Rita Robinson)
County Counsel
Executive Office



June 19, 2012

Honorable Members, Board of Supervisors
500 West Temple Street
Room 869
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Proposed Water Quality Funding Initiative

To the Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

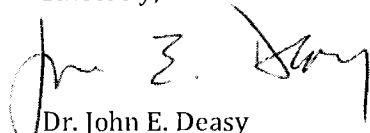
The Los Angeles Unified School District and Long Beach Unified School District have reviewed the proposed Water Quality Funding Initiative ("Initiative") to be considered by the Board of Supervisors for a possible mail-in election in early 2013. We understand the great importance that water quality has on the residents of Los Angeles County; however, we must respectfully oppose such an Initiative as it would impose a significant financial burden on all Los Angeles-area schools.

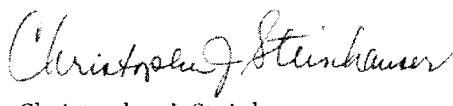
First, preliminary estimates provided by the Department of Public Works suggest that LAUSD would be subject to a \$4.8 million annual assessment while Long Beach Unified would be subject to a \$715,000 annual assessment as a result of the Initiative. Unfortunately, this assessment would be supported by the General Fund budget, just as LAUSD, LBUSD --and indeed all school districts in the County-- are making cuts to core educational programs. The recent economic crisis has resulted in increased class sizes, student-counselor ratio increases, support services reductions, and other reductions to vital programs. We understand that any funding provided to schools as a result of this Initiative would be limited in purpose and would therefore not necessarily address the core operational programs outlined above.

In addition, we are concerned whether this proposed Initiative is legally appropriate and consistent with the terms of Proposition 218. We request further dialogue concerning the potential legal issues raised by this Initiative.

For these reasons, we ask that you consider postponing your action on this item. We would welcome the opportunity to continue a dialogue with the County on finding alternative solutions that do not harm core educational programs serving the children of Los Angeles County. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact LAUSD representative Pedro Salcido at 213-241-6498 or LBUSD representative Jim Novak at 562-997-8189.

Sincerely,


Dr. John E. Deasy
Superintendent of Schools


Christopher J. Steinhauser
Superintendent of Schools